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IVSA Winter Symposium Held in England

JENNIFER SCHLEINING[†]

On December 13, 1999, sixty students from almost twenty different countries converged upon Liverpool, England for the International Veterinary Students' Association Winter Symposium. The students, usually separated by thousands of miles of water or land, were brought together by one common interest: veterinary medicine. As the SAVMA International Exchange Officer, this was my chance to actually meet people face to face that before had only been familiar names on email messages.

John Hunt of South Dakota and I met two other Americans in Liverpool. Toby Eshelman of North Carolina State University is an IVSA Trustee, and lucky for him, he had arrived in Liverpool for an Executive Committee meeting three days before we did. Sarah Carson from Oklahoma State

joined the group on the second day to complete our country's representation.

The purpose of the IVSA Winter Symposium is manifold. English is the official language of the IVSA, so this was an opportunity to bring students of many different backgrounds and cultures to a common ground to share ideas and fellowship. Educational lectures were distributed throughout the week ranging from lab animal medicine to elephant cesarean sections. Also, the symposium offered IVSA the opportunity to hold its biannual General Assembly meeting, which is very similar to SAVMA House of Delegate meetings. Finally, the gathering promotes international veterinary medicine by offering students the opportunity to make new friendships that will last throughout our professional careers.

The Road to Studying Abroad: Where to Begin

If you are interested in studying abroad, here are a few tips to help you get things organized. The trick is to give yourself plenty of planning time. This is a time-consuming process and it can take almost a year to get things organized. The first thing you need to do is determine your objectives.

Ask yourself "what do I want to get out of this experience?" Is there a particular region of the world you are interested in? Location and culture are important, but you should also determine what type of experience you want. Some students take coursework at another veterinary college while others do clinical rotations. Iowa State University already has exchange programs set up with colleges in Glasgow, Dublin, and Hanover. You can spend time at a private practice, zoo, wildlife refuge, marine park, or a research facility.

Finding a contact in the location that you are interested in is the next step to take. The Committee for Veterinary International Opportunities (CIVO) has resources available for student use in the college library. Information is available on opportunities in various countries and which ISU-CVM faculty members to contact. The internet is another useful tool. You should check out the various inter-

national veterinary medicine websites such as www.ivsa.org.

Cost and funding is another item to deal with. There are three sources of funding from ISU: (1) the Hill's committee, (2) the Study Abroad Office, and (3) International Veterinary Medicine Scholarships. Students who register for an international preceptorship have all of these sources of funding available to them. One credit per week abroad is applied toward graduation requirements, and frequently a written report is required.

Where you study abroad and the length of time that you will be there will dictate some of the other details of the planning process. A passport will be essential. However, in some cases you may need a visa that may take 6-9 months to process. An early visit to the travel nurse is also imperative. Some countries require certain immunizations before you can enter.

There are some organized study abroad programs that do not require as much effort on the student's behalf. The college currently offers several programs, such as trips to China and Germany. Dr. Rowley, professor in the ISU entomology department, also leads student trips to Costa Rica and Kenya. LISA TIEBER^{*}

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Jennifer Schleining

The first official day of the Symposium was spent at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in Liverpool where Professor D.J. Gaskell, the acting dean of the faculty, welcomed us. English students recognize their peers as "Professor Gaskell" whereby we would address him as "Dr. Gaskell." This was just one of the interesting differences that I noted between America and England. Next on the agenda was a lecture on laboratory animal medicine and surgery techniques. Students at Liverpool are required to take more classes in this area than American students are, and we covered everything from lab mice to rabbits to more popular "pocket pets".

The afternoon was filled with a guest lecture on equine nutrition where we were able to do a "taste buds-on" lab as we sampled the many staples of the European equine. It was interesting to me to see that they use dried peas in many of their equine feeds. Following the lecture, we toured the small animal hospital at the university where we watched a cardiac ultrasound and enjoyed a tea and mincemeat pie break before returning to the youth hostel.

Late that afternoon we left Liverpool for the youth hostel in Edale, a small community set in a valley two and a half hours away. The roads were very snowy and the wind was rather blustery. Not to mention that England's engineers built roads quite

different than in my homestate of South Dakota. In South Dakota, roads are straight with ninety-degree angles at each turn so we know exactly which direction in which we are travelling. The English are obviously more adventurous folk since their roads seemed to be just wide enough in most spots for two Yugos to pass one another while meandering through tiny towns and around fields surrounded by stone fences that barely missed the bus when a car passed. There are no shoulders in England.

After four and a half hours on the bus, we finally ended up close to Edale, but the turn onto the bridge leading to the town was too sharp for the bus to make. Instead of trying to find an alternate route to accommodate the bus, we all opted for the Fred Flintstone method of transportation and used our feet. One organizer said the hostel was only a mile away, but we found out the next morning that the walk was actually four and a half miles! But I believe that everything happens for a reason; on our jaunt to the youth hostel, we saw two shooting stars, learned Christmas carols in about four different languages, and tasted Austrian Schnapps for the first time that week. The English sure are hospitable though, and even though we showed up four hours late for supper, the staff at the hostel kept the food hot for us and treated us all to hot chocolate and coffee.

Our two days spent in Edale were very exciting and full of firsts for many of us. We didn't have any lectures - only team building activities, competitive games, and a lot of fun. We were all split up into groups of ten students, making sure that no two students were from the same country. This in my mind, was one of the most effective group activities of the week, and I made many new friendships. My group consisted of students from Austria, Croatia, France, South Africa, Greece, Switzerland, Slovenia, and Bulgaria.

While we were there, we did fun physical team building activities, mind games, and archery. I had my first go at abseiling, which is the same thing as rappelling (I think). We took turns abseiling off a ninety-foot bridge over a large stream. The first time was a little scary, but by the second time, I was a little more confident and enjoyed it much more. I also had the opportu-



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nity to go caving! As a former United States Park Service employee at Jewel Cave National Monument in South Dakota for two years leading cave tours and doing recreational caving, I found this the most exciting activity at Edale. The only big difference between Jewel Cave and the small cave we explored was the amount of water inside. The cave in England had so much water in it, at one point we were mid-thigh high in water and it filled our boots! But the experience is one I will not soon forget even though we returned to the youth hostel looking like we had just been flushed down a toilet.

While in Edale, we held our Development Fund Auction. The money raised at this biannual auction goes to a veterinary school in need of supplies, books, and maintenance. This year our money will be going to a veterinary school in Peru who is in need of many current books, a computer, and diagnostic supplies. The school has a radiology department, but no radiography machine or ultrasound. Their books are severely outdated, and they do not even have a computer in the entire university. We feel very fortunate as a group to be able to help out our fellow colleagues in Peru. For the

Development Fund Auction, each country brings a few items to auction off.

This year was a special treat for many of the students at the IVSA Symposium. One of the fab four from America, John, happens to be a professional auctioneer. Many students had never heard a real auctioneer before and the amazing selling prices of the items showed the enthusiasm of the group. When the silent and live auction were over, nearly eight hundred English Pounds were raised for Peru, the equivalent of about \$1200 US Dollars!

Upon returning to Liverpool from Edale, we were hosted by the zoological gardens in Chester. There, we watched videos of zoo medicine in action. The zoo veterinarian commentated as we watched elephant abscesses being lanced, giraffes being anesthetized, and feet being trimmed. One of the most amazing clips, though, was that of only the fourth ever attempted elephant cesarean section. Unfortunately, the attempt was not successful and the elephant died three days after surgery. Equine surgeons from the United States were brought in to do the procedure and to date, there has never been a successful C-section done on an elephant anywhere in the world.

We also had the chance to handle some of the smaller reptiles at the zoo including two snakes, a chameleon, and an iguana. But when keepers brought out the tarantula, I headed for the opposite side of the room, since I am arachnophobic! After an Austrian tried to kiss the spider, though, she got mad, and the keepers had to put her away. The Austrians always seemed to be walking a thin line with a grin! The afternoon brought "behind the scenes" guided tours of the zoo and once again we broke up into groups for the occasion. The tours were fantastic, and I can see why zoo medicine is so demanding and rewarding.

We spent the night at the Farm Animal Hospital in Leahurst where we danced the night away dressed in Christmas costumes. The theme for the evening's party was "A Christmas Ball," and the sparkly, fun attire of students fit the night perfectly. But this party was no match for the following night's Cultural Evening. After a day filled with lectures and tours of the farm animal hospital, students went to work preparing food

and drink native to their countries. When I was first deciding what to bring from America, I was a little stumped for an "ethnically American" food. Macaroni and Cheese? Beans and Weanies? But Toby, John, and I finally decided on Indian Tacos, Jim Beam, and Jack Daniels Whiskey. Sarah brought along peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, which were a hit, and a bottle of Southern Comfort. It was really fun to see the Polish and Scots dressed in ethnic attire, eat Swiss chocolate, receive official Croatian tourist passports, taste English and Macedonian sausages, and watch people get cross eyed after drinking a shot of Austrian liquor.

The night commenced with a live band playing traditional Scottish and Irish tunes on an accordion, electric piano and trap set. We all partook in Ceilidh, traditional Scottish and Irish dancing. Some of the dances were a little harder than others and I think our dance leader was rather amused by our own interpretations of the ethnic dances.

The week winded down with the General Assembly meeting and a treasure hunt. The treasure hunt was a big success and we had to take the train to Chester where we did some sightseeing, some shopping, and a

lot of trying to keep our team members together. We then had to return to Liverpool to research the Beatles, the Titanic, and a few of the city's beautiful cathedrals. My team consisted of Barbara, the IVSA president from Switzerland, Camilla the information officer from Denmark, and a student from Austria. We were supposed to have six people on our team, but we lost two that couldn't keep up with our competitiveness in Chester. We were the second team back and ended up tying for the coveted title of champion treasure hunters!

The week was truly amazing and I could hardly believe it went by so fast. I met so many new friends and the experience will remain with me throughout life. I hope that some of you make an effort to attend the 2000 Summer Congress in Guadalajara, Mexico in July. I promise that you will not regret spending the money to go! An organization such as IVSA that has no ethnic boundaries, rewards its members with fellowship and camaraderie, and offers to help underprivileged schools is definitely an organization to be proud of belonging to, and I hope that everyone here in the United States can take full advantage of their IVSA membership. ♦

CIVO Introduces International Opportunities at Fair

On January 28, 2000, the Committee for International Veterinary Opportunities (CIVO) sponsored the annual International Fair. CIVO is the Iowa State student chapter of the International Veterinary Student Association. It is a new club at the College of Veterinary Medicine, founded in the spring of 1998. The fair features international food, door prizes, cultural artifacts from many countries, and plenty of booths. Faculty who are sponsoring trips, international companies, and international organizations from main campus all sponsored booths. Students had the opportunity to walk around and get more information about available summer educational trips abroad and preceptorship opportunities (besides eating excellent Vietnamese and Chinese food!) The large organized trips planned for summer 2000 are to Beijing, China to learn acupuncture, to Hamburg, Germany,

and to the IVSA Summer Congress in Guadalajara, Mexico. The International Fair is something veterinary students and faculty alike look forward to each year. A special thank you to the International Fair planning committee: Chris Taylor, Betsy Swanson, Pamela Martin, and Renee Funk and the sponsoring companies: Purina, Waltham, Hill's, and IICAB for making it possible.

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